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HOUSE

AND OTHER TALES & STORIES

EDITH OGDEN  
HARRISON





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The  
ENCHANTED HOUSE  
and OTHER FAIRY STORIES







“My Gracious!” said the Wise-Eyed Rabbit

[Page 92]

# The ENCHANTED HOUSE

# and OTHER FAIRY STORIES

*by*  
**EDITH OGDEN HARRISON**

Author of  
The Lady of the Snows, Princess Sayrane  
Prince Silver Wings, etc.

With Illustrations by  
FREDERICK RICHARDSON



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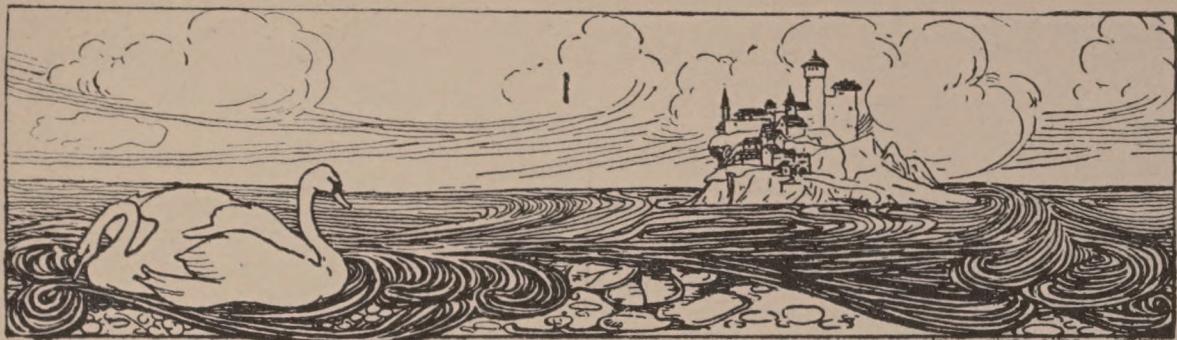
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THE  
ENCHANTED HOUSE



## I

## THE ENCHANTED HOUSE



HE snow was falling fast. Great flakes of it drifted against the window pane. What a beautiful sight it was, too! But a very discontented little girl was watching it. It certainly was the biggest storm Grace had ever seen. Really, it made that old story of Mother Goose picking the feathers from her chickens quite impossible to believe. Grace had had some doubts, any way, of its truth lately, and today she was convinced that it was a fairy tale invented to amuse small children. There simply could not be so many feathers in the world; and, even if there were, no one person could pick them all. She was six years old and she was quite able to decide some things for herself, and this which she saw with her own eyes was surely a subject upon which she was able to judge. So that question was settled forever. Oh, dear, she was

miserable and unhappy today. Everybody talked of blessings received and joys of the year because today was Thanksgiving. But she could think of nothing but her sprained ankle, which caused all her disappointment and unhappiness. No toboggan slides, no skating on the ice, nothing but an old hot room, which made her drowsy. The crisp, cold air would send the blood tingling to her cheeks, but she had to sit cooped up because of the accident. She had nothing to be thankful for; of this she was absolutely sure. Even the delicious turkey and juicy cranberries with the nice pudding she was sure to have for dinner, had no charms. She just hated Thanksgiving! As she said this last aloud she was startled by a small voice which said in silver tones: "Little Earth maiden, would you like a trip to Fairyland with me?" Grace was so surprised she could hardly answer, and her heart pumped violently as she gazed at an exquisite little creature standing before her. "Who are you?" she said. She knew, of course, it must be a fairy, but she asked to be certain. "I," replied the tiny creature, "am one of the many fairies in the world, and I have been sent to bring you to my country, if you care to go." "Oh," promptly replied Grace,

"indeed I do want to go, but I have a sprained ankle and I cannot walk." "That is not necessary," replied the fairy, "and besides, there are no troubles in Fairyland, so you must not mind your ankle, but if you wish to go, come." With these words, she gently touched the little girl, and at the same moment Grace felt herself rise slowly in the air. Together they floated through the open window and found outside a most charming car with a rose velvet cushion and two beautiful swans to draw it. They seated themselves within it, and the swans rose slowly and floated away. The child felt so comfortable, and it all seemed so wonderful that she turned to express her delight to her companion. The guide smiled as she listened and said, "Little Earth maiden, before we go to Fairyland I should like you to get a hurried look at your own world, to have you see some of the many blessings people should be thankful for. Many persons never stop to count or think of all their blessings, but grumble and complain of a few petty troubles." Grace felt the blood mount to her face at these words. She had a guilty feeling that perhaps the fairy had seen her discontent and heard her words about Thanksgiving. But the fairy was

smiling sweetly, and Grace hoped she had not really understood.

They floated over the big city, covered with its soft mantle of snow, but they could see plainly the big stores and the large factories, all evidences of thrift and prosperity. They were closed today because the people were at home resting from employment, and happy and rejoicing in their holiday. They saw palaces and hovels, rich and poor; but they saw most of the rich trying to do their duty and giving in generous portions to the unfortunate ones. And they found content and peace in the poor homes, as well as in the rich. The fairy pointed out how love and gentleness and goodness made us all equal. Then they floated across mountains and lovely valleys, and came to the fair green Southland. There they saw big cotton fields, and long rows of sugar cane (these last with flaunting colored leaves like varied ribbons waving in the breeze), and witnessed evidences everywhere of thriving people with great industries. Busy and happy they were, and thankful for their manifold blessings. They took note of sadness, too, and evil, of course, but the good always overcame the bad and the smiles and laughter were more

frequent than the tears. Great salt mines were seen tunneled into caves, and chambers finely cut and shining like pure diamonds. Splendid forests, beautiful moss-draped trees, and gardens of perpetual roses passed before them, and children played among the flowers, happy and free, and sunshine poured down from heaven like yellow gold. "Are not these blessings enough to earn one Thanksgiving day in all the year?" whispered the guide, and Grace owned in her heart they surely were. But the fairy said though she might spend weeks showing the blessings of the earth, she must hasten her little charge to Fairyland, as she had promised. So they hastened onward, floating upwards towards the skies. To be so near the sky was very thrilling, and Grace watched the stars come out. First, one tiny light peeped out—twinkling and smiling—then another trembled into view and finally a saucy third appeared. Then they rushed out pell-mell, so fast Grace could not count them, and soon the whole sky was spread with little flashing golden points. All this time they were traveling to the North. Soon they saw in the distance a beautiful lace-like dome; it was a tower of ice over an enchanted house and the fairy told Grace that

this palace or house was considered the most precious in Fairyland, and it was this particular one she desired to show. When they reached it Grace was quite dazzled by its magnificence. Great crystal doors swung open for them to enter, and once inside they were surrounded by hundreds of fairies who greeted them most cordially.

Most of the fairies were clad in silver-tissued dresses, but some were in the pale blue of the summer sky, and others had gold strands embroidered on their gowns. And their gossamer wings were fine as cobweb, and their sparkling wands flashed like diamonds. They were the daintiest little beings you ever saw, and Grace was enchanted and bewildered by the wonderful sight. A splendid banquet was soon served on crystal tables in gold dishes, and the most delicious food was passed. The little Earth maiden was the center of attraction, and all the fairies vied in doing her honor. But it was getting late and the guide told Grace she must soon start on her homeward journey, and therefore they arose and excused themselves, because Grace was yet to see the most precious possession in Fairyland. Grace and her companion left the fairies feasting in the brilliant banquet

room, and crossing a court, soon stood within a hall, the largest and most magnificent in the universe. It was this particular hall the fairy guide had traveled so far to show her. It was resplendent and majestic in appearance, all its columns were of solid gold, and all its walls of whitest silver. It was large and very spacious, and looking down its great length, Grace saw glittering and shimmering, and stretching out in endless number, pure golden pillars, their gleaming yellow showing in sharp contrast to the shining silver walls.

She noticed embedded in the silver wall, shining jewels—rubies, sapphires, diamonds, and many other rare gems flashing fire. Some shone out more brilliant than the others, and blazed across the room like the sun's rays. It certainly was a wonderful place, and the little girl felt all the awe, and mystery of her surroundings. "What hall is this?" she asked. "We call it Thanksgiving Hall," replied her companion, "because it belongs to all the children of the Earth. When a little child is born into the world, the whole world is nicer for it, and people rejoice. A fairy takes charge of it until it matures; at the same time we choose a stone, some precious ruby, a sapphire or diamond, as the case

may be, and placing it in this hall we watch it as we do the child. The good deeds of the little ones on the Earth brighten the stone until it shines out like a star." Grace knew then that all these shining stones within the walls were children's lives. "Oh, how pretty!" she exclaimed. "But if the children are naughty, are indifferent or selfish," said the fairy, "the stone is dulled and loses all its beauty." Grace was silent at these words. "Each golden column that you see," continued her companion, "represents one year upon the Earth. One long and beautiful year, filled with blessings and with joys. Days of sunshine after days of rain, days of plenty after frugal fare, perhaps days of health and happiness after days of watchful sorrow. See how rounded and how perfect are the columns, and how symmetrical the shapes. You ask, How comes it that the columns are so uniform, all so much alike? saying, surely each year was different from the others; surely the sorrows and the cares of some outweigh the joys of others. Perhaps, if judged by human minds, this may be true, but when we fairies came to take the measure of the year to cast the golden column for the hall, we found the measure always was just the same. The

year, no matter how it seemed to lack in blessings in one part, made up in others, and so the golden weight of each whole year was always the same. Therefore, when the pillars were cast, they came out in marvelous symmetry and all alike. And so this hall stands far and wide a model of symmetry and grace to illustrate the blessings of the world."

Grace was so impressed with all she heard and saw, she felt she must ask one more question, but fear tightened in her heart. She hesitated for a moment and then shyly asked, "May I see my life jewel?" The guide crossed the room, and bringing back a stone, laid it in her hand. Alas, it was sadly dull, no lustre shone from it, but as Grace's eyes filled with sudden tears the fairy spoke most kindly, "I fear, little Earth maiden, you have been selfish and thoughtless in your few short years. Planning only for your own happiness, taking little heed of others."

Poor Grace had never realized before just how indifferent she had been to others. But her little heart was pure, and quickly she looked up and said amid her tears, "I shall do better in the future, and never will I be so selfish again." At this she handed back the jewel, when, lo! it did not look

the same. It sparkled and shone in long, brilliant lines of light across the room. "Dear me," asked the child, bewildered, "is this my jewel?" "Yes," answered the fairy, smiling, "your unselfish intention has already brightened and beautified it. See how it sparkles across the room," and the guide, as she spoke, crossed the hall and placed it in the wall. Grace stood in silent admiration, in innocent delight watching its brilliant glitter, when suddenly she heard a loud noise like the ringing of the door-bell and some one pulled her by the arm, saying, "I declare, she has fallen asleep by the open window!" Grace opened her eyes to find father and mother calling her for dinner. "Where is the fairy?" she asked. Her father laughed outright. "Why, she is dreaming still," he said. Dreaming! Grace knew better, of course, but her good intentions were firm to keep her jewel bright and polished in Thanksgiving Hall, so she only smiled as she lifted her face for her father's kiss, and in her heart intended to go back to Fairyland and the Enchanted House at her very first opportunity.

THE MOON QUEEN  
AND HER SISTER





## II

### THE MOON QUEEN AND HER SISTER



AM sure all my readers allow that the beautiful Thanksgiving day is set apart for rejoicing and giving thanks for the many blessings enjoyed in the past year. But when you are eating delicious turkey and cranberries and giving thanks for your manifold blessings, do you ever once think of being thankful for the sunshine, the moonlight, and the glorious stars in the heavens? Or for the green trees, and the flowers, and grasses on the earth? These beautiful things are all blessings to mankind, and I think this morning I shall tell you a fairy story about the moon and how the first moonlight came upon the earth.

Have you never heard why the moon looks down so tenderly and lovingly upon the earth? The story is strange, but really it is a pretty one. They are sisters, and they love each other devotedly.

Many, many years ago, when the world was quite young (you know, of course, that the earth and the moon really never will grow old, but the world was young at the time I mention), the moon dwelt here with the earth, and a happier pair of sisters you could not find.

The great globe we live upon was equally divided into two kingdoms, half for the moon and half for the earth, and each sister controlled her own kingdom entirely. Now, the sisters were not at all alike in appearance. The moon was fair and pale. Her form was slender and willowy, and she looked like some graceful, tall lily beside her more brilliantly colored sister.

No greater contrast than the earth queen could be imagined. She, too, was supremely beautiful, but all was brilliance and sparkle about her. She loved the brightest of colors and decked herself in green and gold and scarlet. Her glorious brown eyes dazzled you with their many lights, and her splendid form showed health and vigor in every line. Her hair was reddish brown, with golden lights like fire-flame. Beside the delicate and ethereal beauty of her sister she shone like a gorgeously colored poppy.

It was indeed hard to choose between them. They were such different types of beauty, each in her way supreme; but together they were a delight to behold, and their affection and devotion for each other were marvelous to see.

The earth queen had never married, preferring a joyous, happy independence with eternal youth; but the moon queen possessed several children, and among them was one favorite son. Having lost her husband some years before, she depended greatly upon her children for everything. Prince Myus, however, was undoubtedly her favorite child; as a little fellow she spoiled him dreadfully, and as he grew to manhood she could deny him nothing.

The earth queen often cautioned her sister and reasoned with her about giving the young prince all he desired. It seemed he had only to want a thing to attain it. Now this indulgence was spoiling Myus dreadfully. Still, even the earth queen looked upon him leniently. He was so handsome, so winning, and so loving to mother and aunt that they both thought him perfection, and his mother openly said she did not believe he would ever want a thing unless it was right he should have it; and so he grew to manhood handsome and spoiled.

Well, in the early dawn of the world the star people were often the guests of the two queens on earth, and a great intimacy existed between the sky and the earth.

Therefore, when the moon invited the daughters of the evening star to visit her, the invitation was at once accepted.

The evening star was the father of seven beautiful maidens, so gloriously beautiful that even in the star world they were famous.

Each evening the seven beauteous maidens would rise in the heavens and take their course across the starlit world. Their flashing eyes could be seen quite plainly, and as their bright and graceful forms glided across the blue ceiling overhead, the earth people would say, "There go the Seven Sisters." Soon after the little maidens arose, their royal father, splendid and brilliant, always would follow, watching his daughters closely.

But among them all, he especially cherished the little Princess Astrea. Perhaps it was because she was the youngest, or because her bright gold hair was the brightest, or because her happy laugh was the merriest. Whatever the reason, he simply adored her. So when he consented to her visiting

the earth as the moon queen's guest he begged her majesty to watch her as the apple of her eye; and the moon queen promised faithfully to do so.

Well, the star maidens had a joyous visit. They were feted and courted and treated with all sorts of beautiful attention, and Prince Myus helped his mother do the honors of her home. The moon queen had begged the prince to be especially tender and watchful of the pretty Astrea, telling him how precious the little princess was in her father's eyes, and it was with a feeling of pride she noticed how conscientiously Prince Myus did watch the little Astrea. They never seemed to be apart.

Alas! it was just this devotion that finally made the moon queen unhappy, for after a few weeks Prince Myus announced that he had asked Princess Astrea to marry him and remain upon the earth forever. The consternation of the moon queen can be imagined. She was terror-stricken. It was such a breach of hospitality for her son to court a visitor in her house.

But Prince Myus, though he realized that all his mother said was true, was too used to having his own way to consent to give the princess up at her request. Besides, he loved her dearly and she re-

turned his affection. Still, the young prince was, after all, a manly and honorable fellow, though he was spoiled, and he comforted his mother as much as he could, by telling her he would start at once for the evening star's kingdom and boldly tell the old king of his love and demand his beloved Astrea's hand.

This he did, but alas! no good came of it. The evening star raged like a madman and stormed awfully. He declared that never would he consent to his daughter remaining on the earth, and that if she ever married at all it must be some prince of the sky near him, and gave orders then and there that all the young princesses should return at once to their home, and added they should never visit the earth again.

The sad news that Prince Myus had not been granted his appeal for Princess Astrea had depressed the whole of the moon kingdom. But most downcast of all was the little Princess Astrea herself. She loved Myus devotedly, and it seemed to her she just could not consent to give him up and return to the sky world. The moon queen reasoned long with them both and showed them that obedience to parents was a strong law and that



Prince Myus and the Princess Astrea



Princess Astrea must prepare to leave the moon kingdom for her own palace at once.

At last the day arrived when they must leave Moonland. They arose early to say good-by to the many friends they had formed, all save the Princess Astrea. She could not be found. Search the palace as they did, she had completely disappeared, nor could they find Prince Myus either; only his little page remained to tell the news that the two lovers had married and then fled.

The trembling page stood before the angry moon queen and repeated the prince's words exactly: "Say to mother that all my life she gave me what I willed. Is it then to be supposed that what I desire most on earth I shall give up easily? The Princess Astrea loves me dearly, and now as my wife we will hide together until we are forgiven."

The moon queen was angry and almost heart-broken, and she felt terribly punished for indulging her son as she had done. She blamed herself bitterly, and, claiming it was, after all, her own fault, she declared she herself would make the expiation to the evening star.

And, sure enough, she went with the six remaining daughters to Starland, and her beautiful moon-

light has shown down from the heavens ever since brighter than any star.

The earth queen was inconsolable and would not be comforted. She sat on the borders of the moon kingdom and cried all the time. For a long while after her sister's departure nothing interested her; she neglected almost entirely her own half of the beautiful world and she called herself Enola, which, if you read in another way, means "alone."

She shed so many tears that the moon queen's domains were flooded and gradually formed a great ocean, so enormous that it covers one-half the world.

After a long time, however, the ocean became so beautiful, with its many shades of blue and green and its splendid white-capped waves dancing in the sunlight, that when Enola went there to weep she forgot to do so, lost in admiration of the magnificent sight before her. Then, too, the moon queen talked to her out of her silver palace in the sky and comforted her with loving words, and at night when the moon's silver draperies trailed out over the sky and the ocean's sparkling, gleaming waters smiled back a glittering reflection, Enola felt almost consoled and reconciled.

And ever since, the moon always throws her

charming light by night on the earth, so that in case her son and his willful little bride ever wish to come from their hiding place they may see and know where she is at once; and she smiles down upon the world, firmly believing that some day Myus and Astrea, repenting, will come forth seeking their parents' forgiveness.



A LEGEND  
OF SANTA CLAUS





### III

## A LEGEND OF SANTA CLAUS



AR in the cold Northland where snow clad mountains are perpetual, and where rivers fed from their vast glaciers find their way to the sea, where precipices fall a thousand feet in a single leap, and young trees tremblingly lean over the brink to watch the depths below—dwells a wonderful old man, so they say! I cannot tell you just how many hundreds of years he has lived, but the world knows and loves him well. Some say he is a great saint and very wise, and that nothing in the world past, present or future escapes his eyes. Some say he is no saint at all but a jolly, good natured old fellow, with a round red face and kindly eyes; and others claim he is a myth and that no one has ever seen him. But no matter whether the world takes him earnestly or lightly, his power is the same, and

it is bound to admit he is the most wonderfully beloved character imaginable! The more you hear about him the more you admire him. The more he is discussed and criticised the more mysterious he appears. Now can you guess his name? Why of course it is Santa Claus—or St. Nicholas—or Kris Kringle—whichever you choose to call him! Any and all of these names mean the same to this delightful giver of happiness to the little children.

Whether his home is really amid the snows of the rock clad mountains, with their black and melancholy sides, where the waters pour down in streams like fine fleecy wool into seething cauldrons, where vapory white mists shoot up from ghostly foam below—or whether he dwells in the Southland among the orange trees and the honeysuckle, where the crepe-myrtle blooms and where the sweet scented acacia grows in yellow bunches, and where the birds sing a perpetual song—which ever is really his home he lives forever in the hearts of all generous-minded people! And I should like to tell you a legend about him today which I'm quite sure you have never heard.

Once upon a time a good and holy man dwelt upon the earth. He was young but very wise, and

therefore he sought happiness in a simple life and doing good to others. Little by little he won the respect of every one, but gradually he drifted closer and closer to the children. So that finally (as they learned to love him more and more) he was called the children's friend. They clung to him as though he belonged to them alone, and they came to him daily for almost everything. No matter what their troubles or their joys he comforted and welcomed them. Always sending them away rejoicing and happy. He was a veritable king in his humble dwelling and they his little subjects.

Time passed. Years slipped by, but his home was always open to his youthful friends. He made them simple toys—which he fashioned with his own hands—and then at last (because he had so many friends and gave so bountifully) he trained eight beautiful prancing reindeer to draw his sleigh. In this way he could distribute his toys more easily and quickly. From house to house he went with presents. To poor and rich he gave alike without distinction, until the children far and near had learned to love him and await his coming. Thus he lived for many, many years. At first he was a youth with golden hair and fine brown beard, and eyes

that flashed like stars. But age changes all upon the earth, and so in time his hair and beard were snowy white. Yet still his eyes glowed like fine jewels showing the purity of his soul. At last (in Heaven above) 'twas said his time had come to join them there. His allotted years upon the earth had been lived most beautifully, and now he richly deserved the golden crown awaiting him. His long earned rest they felt would be most welcome to him and so the angels gladly came upon their errand—to tell St. Nicholas the jeweled streets of Heaven and all its other glories awaited him. St. Nicholas received them as became their rank most kindly and respectfully, but with all his wrinkles and his whitened beard and hair he was not ready yet to taste the joys of Heaven. Old as he was, he still was jolly and young in heart and as happy as the day was long and—though he did not hold the joys of Heaven lightly—he said within himself, "What—if I go and seek these great delights—what shall I be able to do for the children? Perhaps in Heaven's pleasures I may forget my little earthly friends. I cannot fashion there their toys, and they would miss me if I went." And so arguing thus the queer old man distinctly refused to ac-

company the angels and accept the joys they offered, urging them to leave him undisturbed upon the earth.

Consternation prevailed among the holy throng at his determination. Never before had they faced such a problem. Always e'er this a saint had welcomed their coming, only too glad to lay down his burden of life and drop the many cares of the world, and go to the delights of Heaven. But this queer little old man had argued well upon the subject. He did not wish to leave the earth until all the children had been gathered safe within the portals of those golden gates, and that would be the end of the world of course. He wished to remain and make the children happy until then, and surely this was a blessed thought! The angels themselves could not help but admire him for his great love of the little ones. And when Santa Claus gravely asked them to leave him undisturbed upon the earth, they were worried as to what was best to do. Finally the old man added solemnly (but his eyes twinkled merrily at the time), "And there are other minor matters to detain me here. What for example, shall I do with my reindeer? I cannot find it in my heart to leave these faithful creatures, and

can I take them into Paradise? Their prancing would be awkward among all the holy saints I'm sure. Yet I cannot carry my gifts to the children without their assistance. No—No—better leave me here among all my little friends." The predicament was truly awkward for the angels. But they saw at once the wisdom of his words. They knew what a terrible commotion it would cause to take St. Nicholas into Heaven with the reindeer, and also what wailing and crying would come among the children of the world at his departure. So they promised (though it was most unusual) to see what could be done for his case. Back they went to Heaven to gain permission for the holy man to remain upon the earth. After long and lengthy talk it was decided to let Santa Claus have his way, but once every year the angels must come to offer him again his golden crown, and if he chooses at this time to change his mind he may return to Heaven with them. However he could not remain upon the earth, that much was certain, because he would continue to grow old and older, and he was old enough already. So it was determined that he should be placed somewhere 'twixt Heaven and earth where he could easily get to

the children, and where, besides, he would always remain the same in age neither growing older nor younger. They gave him a kingdom of his own between Heaven and earth and some day I shall tell you of this wonderful kingdom the angels found, for it contains many marvels, but today I haven't time.

Patiently upon the earth St. Nicholas awaited the return of the angels. Serene and confident he was sure his request to live always would be granted, and he continued to fashion wonderful toys for the children. And this is why this one great saint is so beloved—he refused the joys of Heaven until all the children of the earth could be gathered there, to share them with him. Every year the angels come on Christmas Eve to offer him again the entrance to their golden gates, but they smile among themselves when the holy man refuses to be persuaded, and they in turn beg permission to help him with his mysterious packages. They fill the sleigh with bundles, piling it high with toys, and then these bright beings accompany the jolly little saint on his rounds. Always are they with him on this happy journey. It is a wild race from North to South, but with brilliant wings and

glowing faces they lead the way. The reindeer prance joyfully and follow fast where'er they go. Over savage forests and wild countries must they travel. Across oceans and scouring the coast they glide; over moss-draped trees and sweet scented jungles the angels lead the way. For they know and love the little children too. It was they, remember, who first announced, amid a cloud of glory in brilliant skies, the birth of the infant Jesus. It was they who later guarded the sacred manger holding the divine baby and His holy Mother; and so it comes most naturally to pass that ever since that Holy Night, the night our Lord was born, the angels come to help St. Nicholas make the children of the earth happy; for since the birth of the little infant Jesus, St. Nicholas has chosen that date to give away his toys, because the coming of the Holy Child was such a joy and blessing to the world. And so whether we picture him filling the stockings in the beautiful Southland where the pine-knot fires burn merrily (more for cheeriness than heat), where the lazy alligators sun themselves on banks of the silver bayous, where the moss-draped oaks stand like splendid giants guarding the woodlands, and where the mocking bird sings

all night in the moonlight, and the white magnolia blossoms with their yellow centres peep out in hundreds from the branches of the stately trees; where green-eyed, red-tongued lizards slip through the grass, hiding from the sleek, chattering squirrels stealing pecans, and where the stars shine out of a violet colored sky in weird splendor—or whether we conjure him in the cold, glittering north, clad in red cloak and white ermine, with sparkling snow glistening on hair and beard, where the wonderful glow of the northern lights flit back and forth like glittering ghosts in silver and white garments, where the lofty mountains white-crowned with ice, turn scarlet and flame out like fire in the crimson glow of the setting sun—we always see him with his prancing reindeer, with his well filled sleigh, and his jolly round face crowned with contentment and good cheer, bringing happiness to all the little ones. Long may he live!



THE CITY OF  
DREAMS





## IV

## THE CITY OF DREAMS



BOVE the rim of the towering hills a rainbow stretched. All its brilliant colors shone vividly distinct and luminous against the darker sky. It lay a perfect bow, gleaming and sparkling in shimmering splendor, luring me towards it, calling me to seek its far-famed treasures in that golden city lying at its base. The fascination of its brilliant curve held me spellbound, and watching it I succumbed to temptation and wandered into the Land of Enchantment. There the air was soft and warm and every leaf on every tree was washed and wet, glistening like jewels. There cascades of water shot down from great heights splashing into beautiful valleys and green meadows below, and overhead glorious clouds whiter than snow and brighter than polished silver floated across the blue sky. I looked wonderingly about me, for every-

thing was strange, with a marvelous beauty impossible to describe. Great mountains stretched away towards the setting sun and in their canyons glowed piles of shining gold. Silver lakes lay below me, transparent and clear as crystal, flashing back the celestial blue of the skies until they look like big mirrors. And as I stood dreaming, watching the golden sunshine shimmer on the water or flicker on the trees, I murmured irresolutely to myself: What shall I do? Shall I search further into the mysteries of this beautiful country, or shall I slip back into the cold realities of life and never know what it contains? As I hesitated I still gazed about me. Far in the distance against the sky I saw the tall spires of buildings, and gradually my eyes distinguished the outlines of a city, and a shiver like quicksilver ran through my blood and I said, "It is too late; I must go on and seek knowledge, cost what it may." Soon I stood at the foot of a high wall, behind which lay the city with its glimmering spires which I had seen, and I knocked boldly, demanding admittance. After a short interval of time I could hear heavy bolts thrown back, and presently the great door swung open and I saw a tall soldier with a helmet, who said, "Who is it that

asks admittance to the city of dreams?" And as he stood, balancing his sword and gazing at me, I struggled for composure and answered him. All this time he was looking at me earnestly, as though he were trying to read my thoughts; I suppose my manner impressed him favorably, because finally he replied: "You are the first mortal to seek our domains; still, you may enter. But when you cross this threshold remember that the laws which govern us are love and generosity, and give your oath not to abuse them." In amazement but in all sincerity I accepted his strange invitation, and promised I would not betray his trust and hospitality.

As the heavy door closed behind me I found myself in a broad street and looking upon buildings which seemed to indicate that the city was a busy one. The soldier directing me to follow him approached one of the most imposing palaces of the group in front of me. As it stood upon a slight elevation it was the most conspicuous of all. When we reached its gates he bowed and left me in charge of a sentinel who told me I would soon be in the presence of the King. The sentinel led me up a broad stairs into a room magnificently furnished and there, bowing low as the first had done, left

me to await the coming of his Majesty. In perfect silence I sat and waited. At last a door opened and a queer fat old man with a long white beard and snowy hair, but with the most wonderful bright blue eyes I ever saw entered. He had the jolliest face imaginable and as he advanced towards me I saw that he was dressed in brilliant red from tip to toe. He extended his hand most cordially and as I took it I knew at once who he was. His face was too familiar to be mistaken—it was King Santa Claus himself! His first words were “I am very glad to see you but how in the world did you ever get here?” After answering his question he told me his own history, how after living many years upon the earth it was found impossible to remain there longer because age would render him too feeble to work and so a place was made between Heaven and earth where he could live forever never getting older than he was now. And so in this beautiful City of Dreams he fashioned toys for all the little children of the world. Then calling for his prancing reindeer he showed me all the sights of his busy city. Wonderful factories for dolls, for toy horses, for sleighs, for tops, for engines and cars and for toys of every description;

I could never tell you all of the enchanting things I saw. One big building looked so much larger than the rest that I immediately asked what it was and he told me he was glad it had caught my eye because it was one of the most important of all. It was the postoffice where all the children's letters were received. He said, "when the children write to me asking for a present I try always to give them what they ask, for I regard them as Christmas orders and so naturally the postoffice is a very important building in this city."

It did seem so nice to talk to Santa Claus and to visit with him in his own city. His private palace is built of finest gold but the roof is purest silver and shines white and brilliantly. He calls it the Home of Gladness. In the yard grows a wonderful tree, and a bird sits in its branches who sees everything going on in the world and tells him about it. In this way Santa Claus knows all that he wants to know. And in this Home of Gladness he sits all the year planning new joys for the children; gold and silver surround him, jewels fill his chest but he cares not so much for these treasures as he does for the smiles of the little ones. Sometimes people declare he lives in a bewildering scene

of snow where he is crowned with ice drops shining like diamonds, and where the trees glittering in long icicles look as though they were dashed with fire when the sun shines on them. Sometimes again they see him in the soft shimmer of the Southland where everything is warm and beautiful, where a delicate rose-colored veiling of mist floats, where green trees stand clear and straight against the blue sky, and where the birds sing perpetually. But no matter where we picture him we know that with his kindly blue eyes and his jolly good nature his warm heart is planning a happy Christmas for the children. Of course where I saw him, in the City of Dreams, there are bags and bags of gold, and the wonderful part about those bags is that if you find them you can never empty them. This is what makes Santa Claus so rich, and this of course enables him to give all the time. If you are ever fortunate enough to reach the City of Dreams at the end of the rainbow, as I did once, you will find all of these wonderful things I have told you about, and then I am sure you will agree with me that it is the most wonderful place you ever saw, and say as I do now—A long life and a merry Christmas to Santa Claus!

THE FIRST  
EASTER LILY





## V

### THE FIRST EASTER LILY



HE day was warm, and the sunshine flashing through the oak trees in brilliant sparkles danced along the ground, while overhead the big white magnolia blossoms, in their cradle of green leaves, smiled so broadly that their yellow centres shone like little golden crowns.

Tomorrow was Easter!

Already the skies had a richer tint, and the earth, adding hourly to the gorgeous-colored garments in which it was arrayed, was ready to come forth as Spring.

The birds, rehearsing their hymns of praise for the morrow, fluttered about among the trees, and the flowers could hardly wait to bloom out in a riotous burst of color! Great clusters of pink oleanders were rearing their heads proudly from a mass of dark green leaves, while across the yard daintily

perfumed cape jessamine peeped out, like white stars, from their homes in the thick hedges.

The lawn, stretching away like soft velvet, sloped gently down from the handsome red-pillared plantation house to the white shell road, beyond which glittered and sparkled the blue waters of the Gulf.

Five or six children were playing merrily on the grass. Their peals of laughter, ringing clear as silver bells, made sweet music as they ran about hiding the nests for the Easter rabbit's expected visit.

In every secluded spot one of the nests was put—in the shadow of the rose bushes, in the hollow of a tree, in the deep foliage of the hedge, and under the sharp pointed stem of the sweet-smelling acacia. The Easter rabbit would have to hunt out these hiding places to put its treasures in, if it would please the children.

In the midst of the happy frolic, Charlton, the youngest of the little ones, tiring perhaps of the play, stopped suddenly, and slowly sauntered back to his mother's knee. She sat on the broad gallery of the mansion, dreamily watching the curling waters of the Gulf as they deepened or paled in

wonderful tints of blue, and floating shoreward in a shimmering mass beat gently upon the hard white beach.

“Mama,” said the child, leaning against her wise-eyed and solemn, “what is faith?”

“Faith, my sweetheart,” replied his mother, caressing him, “faith, why, it is trust, perfect trust.”

“Then, mama, if I have faith will God answer my prayers?”

The mother gathered her treasure in her arms before replying, and as she kissed him whispered:

“Yes, my darling, absolute faith will surely bring an answer to your prayers, but my little boy must be older to understand these things,” and she smiled lovingly into his eyes, and the child seemed content with her answer.

But that night, when, tucked in his white bed, the mother thought him asleep, Charlton lay awake and prayed, prayed that he might see the Savior risen, see Him in all the splendor of His shining robes of light, and in the innocence of his childish heart he believed that the vision would come to him.

Through the open window he caught glimpses

of the sky, and in its blue vault shining like a big diamond trembled a brilliant star. He could hear the soft rustle of the leaves as they stirred beneath the breeze floating by, and the air was sweet and heavy with the odor of orange blossoms. A long time he lay awake. The hours, one after the other, struck from the big hall clock down stairs, but Charlton lay quiet and expectant. He could not sleep until—until—

What was that sound, so entrancingly beautiful that he held his breath to listen? It rose and fell in delicious cadences, breathing out the joyous happiness of innocent life, telling of love and peace. The mocking bird was hymning her praises to her Maker. Her throbbing notes floated out soft and rich in the volume of delicious song, flooding the mysterious silence of the night with music.

But what had happened to the star? It had grown larger and more brilliant. It glittered and sparkled with a strange light, while waves of brilliancy filled the room. Silver and gold, diamonds and rubies, mixed together could not have been more wonderful in their splendor. Its long rays reached down in a clear stream of glory flooding the room with brightness, and in the midst floated

a radiant being so beautiful that the child cried out aloud, in an ecstasy of delight:

“Christ has risen!”

His flowing garments shone like the sun. His face was sublime in the majestic beauty of the holy pictures, and as He floated on these clouds of splendid light He stretched out His arms and smiled upon the little child, saying:

“Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”

Charlton sprang forward to meet the glorious vision, but in the instant it had vanished, and he heard the voices of his brothers and sisters crying:

“Christ has risen, Easter is here!”

Charlton lay back upon his bed. He heard the children’s voices mingling in happy talk, and he knew they were dressing in haste, eager to seek the gorgeous colored eggs the Easter rabbit was sure to bring. But he did not stir, he was reluctant to join them, and even when later they rushed out upon the lawn and peals of delighted laughter told of nests filled with red, and purple, and green, and yellow splendors, he lay quite still thinking of what he had seen.

When his mother, missing him, found him in his

little bed, his arms crept shyly about her throat and he softly whispered of his glorious vision. Then smilingly he led her to the window and pointed to the spot whereon his innocent eyes had seen the splendid sight.

They stood together, awe-struck, to find beneath the window a glorious proof of the kingly visit, for there imbedded firmly in the earth, was a wonderful plant with slender stalks, green and tender, swaying beneath the weight of a marvelous cluster of flowers. A delicate perfume floated up from the bright yellow stamens, but they could see that the curving petals of the transparent blossom were as white as the driven snow. Dainty and graceful, this wonderful gift from Paradise, with its strange and delicate beauty, held itself proudly, as though knowing its royal birth.

And thus, stately as a young princess, rose the first Easter Lily.

THE  
CHRISTMAS ANGEL





## VI

## THE CHRISTMAS ANGEL



EAVEN'S golden gates swung wide apart, and through their jeweled portals swiftly passed a radiant angel! Cherubim and seraphim in white garments shining like the sun, watched him as he went. He was wondrous to behold in all his flashing beauty, for his outstretched wings gleamed brilliantly, and on his glowing countenance was the sublime reflection of his Master's face. Slowly he descended. The majestic glory of the universe lay all before him, and as he flew he saw the skies were spangled with the glittering stars. Far below swung the moon in gorgeous splendor, like a great silver lamp lighting his pathway, gathering all her crystal rays to spread and make his journey brilliant. The angel steadily advanced. Long was the way, but well he knew it. Many, many years

had the great King's Messenger sought this path to fill his holy mission, and always with delight. The time was nearly Christmas Eve, and God's angel knew that as the dawn broke upon the gleaming little star (so far below), his feet must tread its soil—for that twinkling sky jewel he was racing to reach had duties for him which must be accomplished 'twixt the dawn of Christmas Eve and the ringing of the joyous Christmas bells. He was familiar with the earth world and all its beauties. Its lofty snow-capped mountains gleamed boldly by day, shining in pure white splendor. Its silver rivers splashed merrily as they ran, and its broad blue oceans glittered like huge turquoises when the sun shone down upon them. The fresh green grass, the fragrant flowers, and the proud waving trees were all a joy to see, while the birds in their gay dresses with their thousand notes of bewildering music (those rhythmic sounds which made perpetual adoration in their song) were charming to the eye. A wonderful world it was—yet, oh, how much more wonderful, its Creator! With what holy joy the angel pondered on these mysteries, and on that great and holy night he first was sent upon his mission! Hundreds of years

had gone since that Christmas Eve, yet to him it was a second of time. Then he was called because a little child would soon be born into the world—a kingly child, whose birth for ages had been heralded and looked for. Yet the angel was not chosen to guard a palace, but an humble stable: Upon a bed of straw lay the son of God—the little Jesus! and by his side that beautiful Virgin Mother, (blessed among women) was watching him.

How strange and wonderful that night. The earth was wrapped in silence. Weird and mysterious was the hour, the whole world was expectant and felt a miracle was near. Suddenly across the eastern sky a star arose. But such a star! Mortal pen cannot picture nor mortal tongue describe it. All the jewels in the world caught and melted into one, would give but faint reflection of its splendor. And those magic rays, stretching out far and wide in wondrous lines of light, betokened a great event. Far spread the glinting rays, until their brilliance wrapped about the kneeling figures of three kings! In the lonely desert knelt those three wise men. Long had they watched and prayed a sign from Heaven—a sign telling them of the birth of Christ, their King. When lo, the glory of this wonderful

star from God hung over them! Bewildered with joy that the hour had come, they followed its glowing light, until in that humble stable they found and worshipped the little King; offering him gold, and frankincense and myrrh. The angel smiled with happiness and held his head more proudly erect to know himself the chosen guardian of that holy manger. All these thoughts passed in review as he neared the earth. Far to the North he saw great lights shifting across the sky. Fringing curtains of green and gold changing suddenly to rose, or deeper still to red, shot up in great feathery lines. The Aurora Borealis was in the heavens, and its flaming lights were like silken banners flung aloft. Nearer the angel floated. The desert now was far behind him; the mountains too were dim and misty. Lying below, wrapped in a mantle of snow, slept a great city.

The dawn was here, the time had come. Silently the angel folded his wings and trod the earth. Yearly at Christmas time when he sought the earth people he saw into their hearts, for his was the right to touch them softly, making them overflow with love and kindness, giving them a joy supreme, so that they gave generously.



The Angel in the Home



If little children fought and quarreled angrily, he went into their midst, and all at once smiles and laughter greeted those who heard and saw. Again, the miser, hoarding gold, reached out and gave in plenty if the angel but grazed his shoulder in the passing. The business man (so cold and calculating), the woman of the world of fashion (frivolous and heartless), the saint, the sinner, all alike warmed at the angel's touch. He made the red blood course warmly in their veins, and suddenly their hearts filled with love for all humanity. Thus did God's messenger wend his way, accomplishing his noble work. To rich and poor alike he came. For often in the poor man's home, as well as in the palace of the rich, God is forgotten!

Today the angel's work was plentiful, and splendidly did he do his duty. Upon the outskirts of the town he found a wretched home. The father ill, the mother with a new born babe, and a small girl of eight. To this last tiny creature belonged the task of earning bread. Her daily wage was their only defense from starvation. No wonder unhappiness and discontent hovered close, but when the angel kissed the brave wee heroine, her load of trouble lifted and passed away. Then when she

in turn pressed her lips to the poor sick mother's brow, the woman's bitterness of spirit fled and with sudden joy she smiled, watching her little daughter hurry to the big store to earn their daily bread. So entering house after house the angel went his way. Upon those content and good he only smiled serenely, blessing them and hurried on—they needed not his care—but by the sad, the wicked, even the indifferent, he stopped always to heal.

The day was nearly done. The snow wrapped city gleaming with the lights of evening was brilliant with a mysterious beauty all its own.

Suddenly in a palace window the angel saw a child. Beautiful as a flower was Elite, the only daughter of the house. But on her pretty face was most plainly written discontent, and her countenance shone hard and cold. The angel looked upon her wistfully. She was so young. Here was a little soul with all earth had to give. Fond parents, wealth, and perfect health were hers, yet on her brow the ugliest discontent was stamped. Naught pleased or interested the spoiled child, all came so easily at her bidding; nothing was ever desired long enough to make it seem worth while. The angel watching looked pityingly upon the little girl, and

pondered long. Was this a case for him to cure? He hardly knew, but the child's wistful eyes haunted him. He could not pass her by. She seemed the merest baby in her eight short years. His heart went out in a great wave of sympathy to the little one, so far astray. Slowly he entered the palatial house, and drawing near Elite, stooped whispering softly one tiny sentence in her ear. Just five small words he uttered and kissed the baby face, but what a miracle had happened in that short time. Elite flushed a rosy, happy color and bounding to her mother's side, showed her sudden joy. The mother marvelled at the change in her spoiled darling—never before had she seen her listless daughter so radiant, and unmistakably interested—and, as she pressed the little girl to her heart, consented gladly to her earnest request.

A little later, bundled in rare furs and robes, the mother and child gliding in a sleigh, were carried to the heart of the big city. Prancing horses, nodding plumes and jingling bells heralded their approach. The white city was gay and resplendent with its many Christmas lights. The crisp snow glistened like diamonds in the roadway, and its white crystals crunched in a sparkling mass be-

neath them as they passed. The night was advancing, already a starry sky in glorious spangles was stretching overhead. The celestial tapestry was twinkling in sparkling jewels. The drive was full of joy to the two people so earnestly discussing their new made plan. In front of the big store the prancing horses stopped. It was aglitter with gorgeous lights and colors. Thousands of gay shoppers moved hastily in and out. The streets were full of people carrying packages and wearing smiling faces. Eagerly Elite scanned the crowd, evidently she could not find what she sought. "Patience, dearest," counseled the wise mother, but Elite's tiny heart beat rapidly. What if after all she should be disappointed? Her lips quivered at the prospect of such shattered hopes. They moved closer to the bright window. Suddenly Elite clutched her mother's arm. "See," she whispered excitedly, "maybe she might be the one I seek." Her mother nodded assent to her unspoken request, and then Elite walked slowly forward towards a little girl of about her own age. The child so poorly clad, was pale and looked very tired, but her eyes watching the window were fixed in rapture upon the face of a large doll. That golden-

haired, blue-eyed treasure was dressed in silk and laces, and was surely beautiful with its pink cheeks and red lips. To its tiny admirer it seemed the most desirable thing on earth. Elite scarcely saw the window or the doll, she was too intent watching the little stranger. Gently she touched the child's arm and the little one turned to face her. It was the wee heroine the angel had seen that morning. For a moment the waif seemed dazzled by Elite's splendor, and surely with her shining eyes, bright red cheeks, and warm, nice furs she looked a princess. Small wonder then the poorer child was spellbound with admiration. The two children gazed upon each other for a moment silently, the one filled with eagerness and hope for a well formed plan, the other with surprise and wonder at the sight of Elite. Then the latter spoke hastily, nodding towards the gaily colored window, "Would you like that doll for your very own?" "Oh," answered the other child, trembling with delight, "you surely do not mean to give me that!" Yet that was just part of the great plan formed by the richer child.

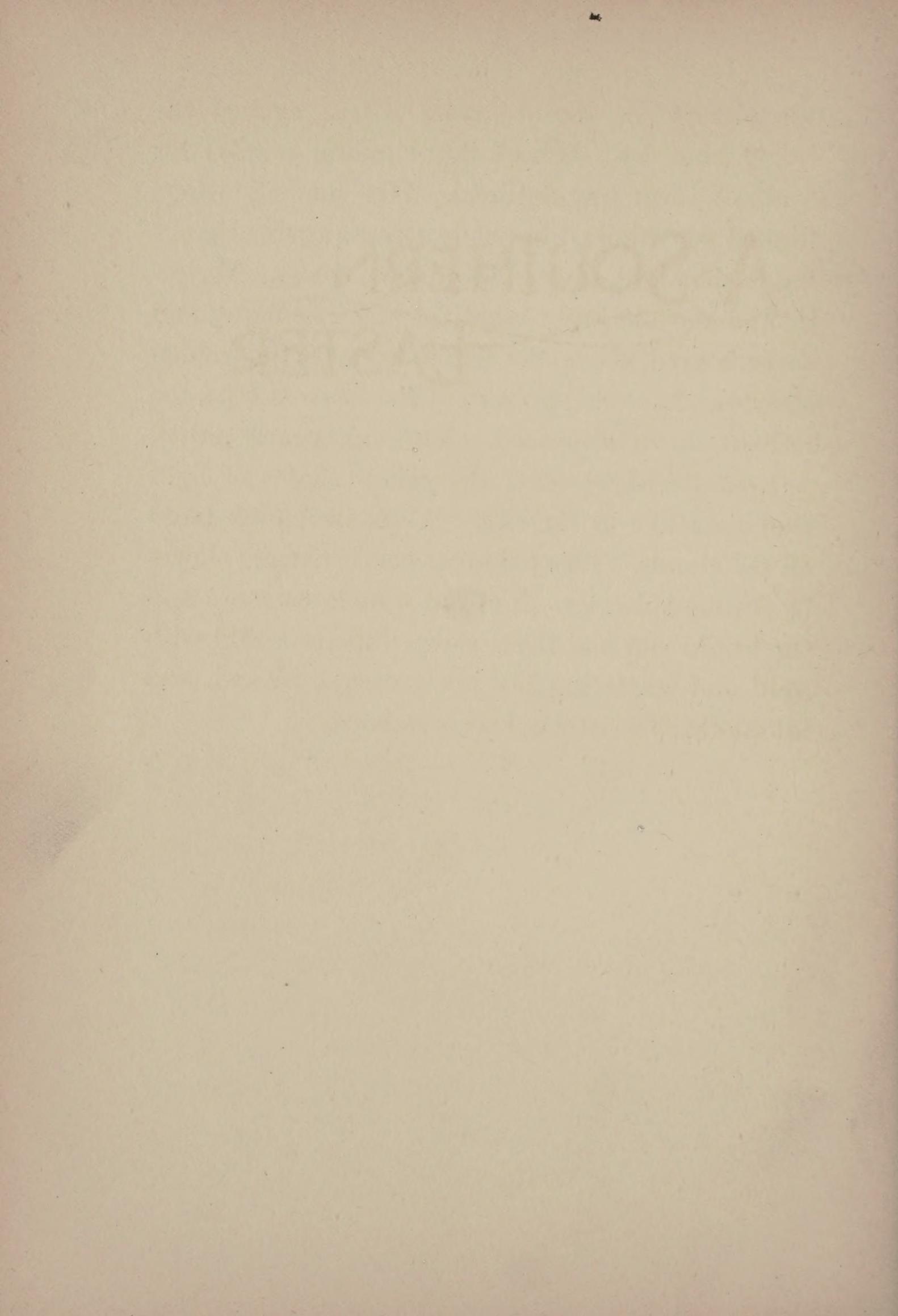
To Elite it seemed the greatest happiness she had known in all her young life, when she laid the golden-haired treasure in the little stranger's arms.

Then when warm clothes and food were chosen for those in that poor home, and the sleigh was packed high with all the bundles to give joy, Elite felt quite like Santa Claus. Which child was happier, it were hard to say. At last, when tucked in her white bed, Elite lay tired (but so content) she lifted her face to meet her mother's good-night kiss, and said most solemnly and wisely: "The Christmas Angel must have touched me when he passed. I am quite sure he stood beside me for I heard him say distinctly five nice words. 'Make one poor child happy,' and every Christmas, mother dear, I shall do this thing." Oh, little children, think of the joy of doing this! "Make one poor child happy every Christmas day."

Elite was sleeping soundly, content, for her good deed was written on her brow. The Christmas Angel bending over her, preparing for his flight to Heaven, smiled happily to see her joy. His work upon the earth was done. The midnight bells were ringing joyous birthday greeting to the little Jesus, Saviour of Mankind, and all was peace, good will upon the earth.

Gently the angel unfolded his graceful wings and softly he rose towards Heaven. What a glori-

ous picture the ascent made. Clear against the bright blue sky (with all its twinkling jewels) his brilliant form was outlined. His moving wings flashed sometimes like white silver; again, changing in the night, glowed in rainbow colors. Majestic and bewilderingly beautiful was that flight, and as he soared above the world towards the golden streets and jeweled palaces of the Eternal One, the radiant dawn appeared. Through pearly mists, (across steel-blue seas) the yellow shafts of light shot spearlike in the sky. A sea-shell pink laced all the clouds. This pale-rose color changed slowly to orange splendor. Yet but a moment more and the bright sun had risen, showering the world with gold and scattering his jeweled rays abroad, and lo! another Christmas Day was born.



A SOUTHERN  
EASTER





## VII

### A SOUTHERN EASTER



AR away in a beautiful Southern land where the sky is nearly always the deep blue tint of the ocean, and the sun seems brighter than anywhere else in the world, dwells the Easter rabbit! Of course the Easter rabbit goes everywhere to put its colored eggs in its nests, but in this land of sunshine and magnolias it loves to dwell. There, where the bayous slip in silver splashes through acres of rich black soil, where the big star-eyed passion flowers border the pretty streams, where the tints by day are softened by a tender haze, and by night mysterious lights flit back and forth through pearly mists lying low over the reeds and marshes, there does the pretty rabbit make its home! Perhaps the dreamy stillness of these Southern swamps breathes to it of the silent desert where it first received its blessing;

and ever since that time it has brought joy to the hearts of little children.

That desert so far away the Easter rabbit has never forgotten. Near it great feathery palms bordered a wonderful flowing river, and on either side of those silver waters stretched a strip of green like a long lizard, but the desert itself was only yellow sand and rocky hills, barren of even the smallest blade of grass. The heavens were always blue, and rain never fell from the smiling skies and only the shadow of a great pyramid gave a cool shade from the glittering yellow lights of day—but in that desert once a little Child rested with its holy Mother and its foster father—fleeing from a wicked king's wrath. Then it was the rabbit (in a moment of curiosity) crossing their path, learned to love the child, and the Baby blessed it, holding it to its heart in childish pleasure. The rabbit from that moment loved all children for this Holy One's sake.

The Christ Child came to the earth when the angels sang in the midnight, and the wonderful Star of Bethlehem guided the Magi to the holy stable. His coming had been predicted, and the world was watching for the birth of a great King.

Many expected him to appear as an earthly monarch, in a blaze of glory—perhaps in a big palace, with splendid gardens and shining crystal lights; to dress in gorgeous silken garments and fine clothes, and with His retinue of servants to thrill those who saw Him with His splendor; finally to subdue and conquer the whole world. So they awaited the great spectacle of these riches, and anxiously looked forward to the event of His birth.

But oh how different was the coming! In the lowliest and humblest of places was He found. A stable was His home, and only those who loved and believed could quite understand why He had chosen thus to come. Yet the coming of this Christ was truly great, for He needed not the riches of an earthly king to mark His name. His deeds of love and kindness have stamped themselves in perpetual splendor on the world. His life stands out more brilliant than all the jewels of the universe caught and melted into one, for He dwells forever in the hearts of Christians.

Now when the three wise men hastened to pay their homage to the little King born of that saintly Blessed Virgin, the wicked monarch Herod sent

for them. He made them promise to return and tell him where this Prince of Greatness could be found. He too wished to worship at His feet and learn wisdom from His lips. So talked the wily king, but in his wicked heart he meant to kill the little child at once, to murder him as soon as he knew positively of his birth. Cruel and wicked in all things was this same Herod, and this infamous desire to murder the Christ Child was only one of many evil thoughts. But he made the Magi believe his words, and they promised to return and tell him.

But God interfered, and, after they had gone a little way, an angel appeared and told them why Herod wished to seek the Savior of the world, so they did not return through Herod's country, and never reported to him at all what they had seen.

All of this only angered Herod the more, for jealously he feared the Baby King would prove more powerful than he, so he sent his soldiers far and wide to seek the news and tell him where the Baby was, and each day his hatred grew more intense and wicked. But the soldiers searched in vain—they could not find the child.

It was at this time an angel came to Joseph and

told him to take Mary and the Child into Egypt and flee before the wrath of the wicked king. They were none too soon, for Herod, angry at his inability to find the Christ Child, ordered every male baby in Bethlehem under two years of age slain, believing in thus murdering all these innocent children he would be perfectly sure at least to kill the infant Jesus.

Think how terribly the mothers mourned and wept for their precious children! Think how awful was the desolation in the land! It was a fearful crime to slay those innocents, and God punished Herod most dreadfully for it. He never had a peaceful moment afterward, and all his life that terrible scene tormented and haunted him, and when death came at last it came in a fearful form.

Now when the angel told Joseph to take Mary and the Child into Egypt, Joseph obeyed at once, knowing full well the danger of delay, understanding that Herod meant to destroy the Babe; so quickly taking an ass, he placed the Blessed Virgin and the Divine Child upon it, and led the way by night out towards the land of Egypt.

The way was long and dreary, and poor Joseph felt the great responsibility of the two dear lives

he had with him. Faithfully he protected them as best he could, and carefully he guarded them from harm. But there were many fearful inconveniences to be met. Mary held the child close to her breast to warm and nourish it; but she was frail, for after all she was a woman. Her delicate body was unfit to meet the strain of such a hurried journey. Worn out with fatigue, she could scarcely sit upright upon the ass. Nightly they had to sleep upon the open ground, and alas! the young woman, exhausted and faint, shivered upon her cold, hard couch, unable to sleep at all. The baby nestling in her arms was her only joy and comfort, but she feared in her mother's anxiety. He too might feel the chill of their cold bed, so raising her eyes to God she begged Him tearfully to comfort and console her and make them warm. All that day, sitting straight upright on the ass, Mary prayed, and prayed for relief and warmth that night, so she might have courage for her long daily ride.

The evening hours had come. Long streaks of red and gold laced all the sky and colored the desert world a rosy pink, then brilliantly the tints deepened into scarlet, until at last in a flame of glory the sun had sunk to rest. Softly the violet shadows

crept upon the heavens, shading the light to quiet grayness, and then, behold, the night was over all!

A  
*Southern Easter*

They stopped upon the desert, near the outskirts of a cold, wet marsh leading to the sea. The dampness and the chill seemed even more penetrating than before; yet Mary felt within her that God had heard her prayer, and she was comforted. She smiled as she kissed her baby's velvet cheek and pressed Him to her. Surely God would protect them. She laid her head upon the cold, hard ground as though it were the softest bed she knew, and presently her beautiful faith was rewarded, for at this moment the rabbit crossed their path, and creeping close to the Holy Infant, pressed its warm furry body against the Child giving both heat and comfort. Thus snug and warm the Baby and His Mother slept all night in that cold desert, and ever after the rabbit loved all children for His sake.

The Christ Child lived his beautiful life to manhood and died upon the cross to save this sinful world, but all the guarding of His tomb by soldiers could not prevent His resurrection—Easter morning, glorified and beautiful in garments shining like the sun, he arose resplendent—and though he loved us all, I think he loved the little children

best, for he said "Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven."

Now the Easter rabbit (so my legend runs) loves all the children in the world, and each year since has brought the pretty colored eggs to make them happy. Each clime has its own particular way of rejoicing at its visit, but the Southern children build the rabbit's nests for it, and delight in making the pretty creature search them out—and though the rabbit never fails to find them, the fun of the secret building is too great to be abandoned. Under the big trees, beneath the thick hedges and rose bushes, through the tall, swaying grass, hidden in mosses, lie the nests.

Down at a big plantation house where the broad galleries are supported by large red-brick pillars, and the window shutters are painted a vivid green; where looking through the open door one sees long rows of umbrella china trees on either side the white pebbled walk; where the handsome hedges of acacias, with their tiny yellow blossoms filling the air with fragrance, line the fences everywhere; where the lawn soft and green slopes down to the hard, white oyster shell road, and a little beyond shimmering in the distance, smiling in bril-

liant sparkles lies the gulf, there it seems to me Easter is the best. Red-throated lizards dart through the grass, mocking birds sing in the magnolia trees, chattering squirrels gather walnuts and pecans, and the Easter rabbit, hiding in the old marsh, bides its time. All is warm and beautiful in this land. Lovely clouds float lazily across blue skies, hardly a breath stirs the unruffled waters of the bayou, but long yellow beams and golden lights quiver in its shining depths. Slowly the night gathers, and then slipping out through the evening mists, the rabbit seeks its nests. All night it fills them with varied colored eggs, piling them high in splendor, and then when morning dawns the happy children, (mid peals of laughter) seek their treasures, singing in joyous tones, "Christ has risen—blessed be this glorious Easter Morn."



FASTER AND  
THE RABBITS EGGS





## VIII

### EASTER AND THE RABBITS' EGGS.



HE sun poured down in golden rays from the bluest of skies. The land beneath was clothed in the richest of robes and the trees in the brightest of green dresses with the gray moss draping them had an air of dignity impossible to describe. The stretch of green meadow glinted like softest emerald velvet, and where it met the marsh the long lines of rushes swayed and nodded a lazy greeting. Everywhere the gaudy Southern flowers smiled in glad rejoicing, for nature was at her best at this season and the riotous flames of color she flaunted was only her way of showing gladness. Today was Easter! On the early morning air the joyous bells rang out a glorious peal of melody, Christ has risen! Throughout the world that joyful news was spread and everywhere the joy was manifest.

But while the world rejoiced because of this, a

suppressed excitement, too, was evident in the smaller creatures of the earth. Why was this? The red-tongued, green-eyed lizards darting through the grass showed plainly that they possessed a great secret. The chattering birds in the thick foliage of the branching trees gave noisy proof of it and the lazy alligators floating in the silver waters of the shining lagoon evidenced the same fact. It was a wonderful day, no one could deny its spell, no one could deny that a great thing had happened. But I must begin my story.

A short time before the dawning of this wonderful Easter morning Natelka the most beautiful of fairy queens, had met with a terrible disaster. In consternation and distress she called her fairy subjects to her side and told them of her grief. It was no less than this: Her fairy wand, the most potent of all her charms, the most wonderful of all her treasures, had disappeared. Could she have lost it? Had it been stolen? These were the questions she asked herself.

The loss of the crown jewels or of all her wealth together would have been as nothing compared to this. Because her diamonds, her pearls, her fabulous jewels and her gold plate could all be replaced,

but the wand of a fairy is her greatest possession. It is the inheritance of royalty, the birthright, and once lost it can never be duplicated. Naturally, therefore the unhappy Natelka was very miserable and sorely distressed. From one end of fairyland to the other the news of the disaster spread and the search was made to recover it. Alas, to no purpose! That glittering symbol of a fairy's royal birth had disappeared completely, leaving no clue to trace it.

Downcast and disconsolate, the unhappy Natelka wept uncomforted while her faithful subjects sought the precious wand far and wide through all the realms of fairyland.

At last, fully convinced it was not to be found anywhere in her domain, Natelka sought her faithful friends upon the earth, urging them to come to her assistance and seek her lost treasure. She gathered the birds and the insects and the animals together, and amid tears told them her sad story. In deepest sympathy they listened and at once promised their aid, and assuring her they would begin their search without delay. At this moment a tiny pink-eyed snowball of a rabbit hopped clumsily forward and solemnly asked for an exact

description of the wand. The other animals shouted with laughter at the presumption of this comical creature, and declared she was too stupid and too ignorant to be allowed to search. Even the good natured birds preened their feathers contemptuously and said, "We waste time in talking to this stupid rabbit." But Natelka thought not so, and smiling sadly answered: "No one is too lowly to help in a good cause," and, leaning forward, answered the question of the rabbit, bidding her to help in the search.

And this glorious Easter morning they were all to come back to her and report to the fairy world the success or failure of their search. No wonder, therefore, that the lizards were excited and running about telling the news everywhere.

One by one the earth creatures came and one by one they each and all admitted that they had failed to find any trace of the coveted treasure. Miserable and unhappy the fairy queen listened to them. Her hopes were utterly dashed by their reports. Alas, her wand was gone forever! She must make up her mind to bear this great affliction, for never again would she have the wonderful power that only the fairies possess.

Suddenly in the distance across the green meadow and coming towards the marsh they saw a curious sight. It was a tiny mortal. A little girl toddling along. She could not be more than three or four years old. Close in her arms she carried a rabbit that they could see quite plainly, because Bunny's sharp-pointed ears stood up straight, and as she came closer they saw the bunny had the pinkest of eyes and recognized it as the same little animal who had spoken to Natelka the day of her sad confession.

Natelka waited breathlessly the approach of the little mortal, for of all things on earth she loved the little children. When the child drew near she lifted her clear blue eyes and looking steadily from under her golden curls at the queen, spoke shyly: "Oh, beautiful fairy queen, do you not remember that one night when you came to see me you laid your wand down upon my bed and left it? I thought it was a gift you were making me and so I kept it hidden and felt with grateful pride you had given it to me. But Bunny, to whom I tell all my secrets, says it is a mistake and that you want it back." Thus speaking, the little one gravely drew forth the glittering, jeweled wand from

under her cloak and laid it in Natelka's hand. Almost speechless with happiness at the sight of her long-lost treasure, Natelka accepted the wand. Then she found her voice: "Oh dearest of little mortals, you have made me supremely happy by restoring my badge of royalty in fairyland. Without it I am shorn of my greatest power and I could never give it away. To you it would be of little value, for you can only use it in your childish years. Once grown it would have no charm for you and you would throw it away as a trifling stick. But in my hands I shall use it for your happiness, for I will never forget my debt to you in bringing it back to me when I had despaired of its recovery. Your friend the rabbit, too, has my deepest gratitude, for she has been the means of finding it. Together you will always be united in my thoughts. In gratitude to you both see what you shall find each Easter morn in the rabbit's nest from me." And turning she lifted from the tall marsh reeds beside her the rabbit's nest and handed it to the expectant little girl. "Oh!" said the child in pure delight as she caught sight of it. "My gracious!" said the wise-eyed rabbit, rubbing her eyes in surprise. For what they saw was a miracle of beauty.

Great, golden eggs piled high, with red ones and blue ones and green ones, too. And purple and pink eggs peeped out, and red and lavender ones. What a gift of joy for the children! And always since that time the rabbit has been the children's friend. And whether it be in the cold Northland, where the winters are long and the snow spreads a soft, white mantle to cover the ground or whether it be in the land of sunshine and magnolias, where the crepe myrtle blooms in a glorious pink splendor, the rabbit joyously fills her nest with priceless treasures on every Easter morning.



A  
CHRISTMAS GIFT





## IX

### A CHRISTMAS GIFT



HERE was a crispness in the air suggesting frost, yet it seemed more like spring, for the glittering skies wore a rich blue tint and the sunshine splashed everything with gold. The garden was aflame with color; great clusters of pink oleanders reared their heads proudly from their cradle of green leaves and nodded a stately good morning to the world. Blood red poppies sprang riotously forth from the earth, while the long rows of tall magnolia trees showed their creamy blossoms, holding open their white chalices to catch the sun. From the great white plantation house, with its green shutters and red brick pillars, the soft green lawn sloped gently down to meet the hard oyster shell road, beyond which gleamed and sparkled the blue waters of the gulf.

The air was filled with the odor of flowers, the yellow acacia, the pink crepe myrtle, the sweet olive bloomed abundantly, the birds hovering in the trees raised their happy voices in delightful praise of the world's beauties.

Robbie was only six years old, but as he romped about the yard, with Beauty, his big dog, he felt very wise. "Beauty," he whispered, "I have discovered your secret at last," and Beauty, barking with delight, showed his joy at those words. The dog was a splendid animal and almost as large as a Newfoundland. He was a setter and pure white, save for the tips of his ears and tail, which were dyed as black as ink. Robbie adored him, and together they shared the pleasures of life. Today, however, for the first time, Robbie had learned a remarkable thing about Beauty.

Aunt Hannah, his old colored nurse, down at the negro cabin, confided the wonderful secret, and Robbie's childish mind was in an ecstasy of delight over it.

"O, Beauty, if it is only true!" cried the child joyously. "If it is really true then tonight I shall prove it."

Tomorrow was Christmas! The plantation

hands were all busy preparing for the great day. Robbie could see the negro servants bustling and running about the place. No wonder the squirrels in the pecan trees chattered loud and quarreled angrily; they had difficulty now in finding the juicy nuts they were accustomed to steal and hide in their nests, because for many days the nuts had been picked carefully and put away for tomorrow's feast. Even the red-throated, green-eyed lizards seemed excited as they slipped through the grass, snapping their scarlet tongues out to catch a passing fly. But who would not be excited on Christmas Eve?

Big piles of fat pine knots lay gathered on the hearths to make brilliant fires. Robbie and Beauty had scoured the pine forests helping to gather them, and tomorrow they would blaze in the wide fire-places. Already Robbie could see (in imagination) the flames leaping up with colors of rubies and opals, of diamonds and sapphires, melting together as if some magician's wand had touched them. Branches of holly berries decorated the bright mansion in scarlet and green, for tonight Santa Claus would come, bringing joy to all the little ones. But though Robbie's heart beat high with visions of

toys and a nice fat stocking, his little head was filled with the great secret he had just learned from Aunt Hannah's lips. Could it be true? It was too wonderful to believe, yet he determined to lie awake that night and test its truth, for it was no less than this—that Beauty could talk, wonder of wonders! Yet Aunt Hannah ought to know; she said between the magic hours of twelve and one o'clock all the animals in the world had the power of speech!

Robbie could scarcely realize it, but it must be true, since Aunt Hannah said it, and Beauty certainly seemed wise enough to do anything. Night came at last; his stocking hung limp beside the chimney, and Robbie, tucked in his white bed, with his father's and mother's kisses lying soft upon his lips, was left alone to slumber.

But, wise-eyed and solemn, little Robbie lay expectant. The hall clock ticked away the hours one by one, but he could not sleep. Through the window near his bed he watched a star twinkle—how it glittered and trembled in the blue heavens, sparkling more brightly than any diamond he had ever seen. What a beautiful world that star must be! Its long rays streamed down and danced in brilliant sparkles across the window pane. Blinking

his eyes, he gazed steadily at its silvery white light, when suddenly the great hall clock struck midnight.

At last the magic hour had come! Robbie could hardly breathe, his heart beat so rapidly, but he had no time to lose; Beauty was expecting him. In his warm wrapper and slippers a tiny figure glided down the staircase. The fire was still burning brightly in the library when Robbie entered and before it stood the big white setter wagging his tail for joy, but not barking. As Robbie came towards him Beauty said quite plainly: "Little Master, you are prompt, for midnight is still striking." "O, Beauty," answered Robbie, sinking on his knees beside his faithful friend and putting his arms around his neck, "it is true, then, and you can really talk!"

"Yes, little Master, once a year I can speak, and for one hour only. I spend my whole year planning what I shall say during that short hour, but day by day I change my precious sentences. One phrase, however, I have never altered, and that one is, I love you, little master, because you are so kind and good to me."

"Beauty," replied Robbie, tenderly hugging him closer, "I love you better for these words, and I shall never forget them."

Then the dog told the little boy how in a few minutes all the animals would meet and talk together just as wisely as the grown people, and Robbie, clapping his hands for joy, said: "I must hear the horses." He felt that as these big animals stamped and snorted and reared their heads so proudly they were quite sure to be brilliant and full of wisdom in their speech.

"You shall hear the horses talk if you wish," answered Beauty, "but we must hurry to their meeting place, little master, and I had almost forgotten to tell you that a wonderful privilege is given to you tonight also."

"To me?" replied Robbie, astonished. "What do you mean? What privilege is given to me?"

"You can visit a star palace tonight and ask its queen for any gift within her palace and she cannot refuse you. However, if you stay to attend the council of the animals you will lose that right, for you must see the queen before one o'clock."

"But how can I reach the star palace?" continued the child.

"Come," answered Beauty, "I will show you." And together they passed from the house to the soft green lawn outside. There a dazzling sight met



“The Queen of the Star Palace Bids Me  
Bring You To Her”



Robbie's eyes. He saw the bright, shining star he had watched from his little bed, but it had grown so large that its rays were bright as the moonlight and spread over the whole lawn. As he watched the white rays glimmer he saw dancing, in and out of its gleaming pathway, a flood of beautiful creatures with shining robes and flowing hair. The most graceful of these forms wore a pale blue dress and on her golden hair lay a gleaming, sparkling crown of twinkling diamonds. Her exquisite limbs were chiseled like a statue's, and as she danced in and out of the silver rays her diamond crown glittered like the stars and the tiny wand she carried in her hand flashed flames of red and blue fire. The slender figures glided and floated about in a novel kind of dance, and as they moved they sang sweet songs. The boy thought he had never seen anything so beautiful and when the entrancing leader, she of the blue gown, held out her arms and beckoned to him his heart beat high.

When the dance was finished the lady of the pale blue robe approached the child, saying: "Little mortal, my mistress, the queen of that star palace overhead, bids me bring you to her. Will you come?"

For a moment Robbie hesitated, dismayed—if he went with her he could not attend the council of the animals, yet he could not bear to refuse her; but when he turned to Beauty for advice his faithful friend whispered: “I cannot help you, little master, you must choose for yourself.”

Then she of the azure robe looked tenderly upon the little boy, saying: “Come with me,” and the child, as he looked upon her beautiful face, felt confidence in her words and wanted to go with her. Yet he could not bear to miss the joy of hearing the animals talk. What should he do?

“Beauty, dearest,” he said, stooping to caress the dog, “if I go to the star palace will you promise to come for me next Christmas eve? Will you take me then to the council of the animals?” And the faithful dog promised he would do as the boy wished, and Robbie, contented with the answer, rose and, while his heart beat high with happiness, placed his hand within that of the Star Messenger and he felt himself slowly rising with her in the air. The golden haired messenger of the Star Queen put her arm gently about little Robbie and held him close; then, as they rose higher and higher, she told him many wonderful things about that magical hour of

midnight on Christmas eve, the birth hour of our Savior! A great change came upon the world; often the hardest heart would suddenly melt to kindness; the miser would part with his long-hoarded gold; the poor were made happy, for the rich gave generously. Throughout the world there always was rejoicing when the bells rang out for Christmas morning. "There goes Santa Claus now," she called, and, looking down, Robbie beheld a big sleigh filled with toys. Eight magnificent reindeer carried it flying through the air, and the jolliest man, all bundled in furs, was driving them swiftly along.

Still the Star Messenger and her little charge rose higher and higher—trees and mountains lay below them, smaller and smaller grew the world, rivers seemed tiny lines of silver and oceans but brilliant splashes in the distance—through the big white clouds they sailed, and higher still, until the earth was a big, moving ball below. What a magnificent voyage it seemed to youthful Robbie! Closer and closer they came to the dazzling star palaces hanging like night lamps in the clear blue sky. At last they stopped before the shining gates of one larger and more beautiful than all the rest. At a

touch from the fairy's wand the jeweled gates swung open. As they entered the courtyard thousands of lights glittered in the palace windows, causing a brilliant flood of light to encircle them and tinge the palace with the colors of a rainbow. The air was soft and scented with the odor of flowers, though Robbie could not see any.

When they entered the palace they were immediately surrounded by hundreds of beautiful creatures who resembled his guide, but none of them seemed quite so lovely to Robbie. They led him into the presence of their queen. The Star Queen was clad in silks and laces and also wore a crown of tiny stars upon her head. She welcomed the little stranger and bade him sit beside her on the throne while her maidens brought the wondrous jewels of the palace that he might choose some gift to take to earth again. "Whatever you wish, little mortal, shall be yours tonight," said the queen. Robbie gazed shyly upon her majesty as she spoke, and, lovely as she was, he thought his guide more charming still. As the child saw the profusion of magnificent jewels laid before him and the baskets of priceless gems the fairies were still bringing towards him his honest blue eyes grew troubled. How mag-

nificent it all was and how generous of the Star Queen to let him choose from all these shining heaps of costly splendor! Yet his glance did not linger upon these fine things strewn about, but sought the serene face of the Star Messenger he had learned to love. Her smiling countenance answered his imploring look and gave him courage to ask a great gift of the queen. But when he gained heart to name it it caused consternation throughout the palace, and hundreds of star fairies held their breath and fluttered about in supreme astonishment. He has not asked for a single jewel—he did not even notice them as they lay in splendid confusion upon the floor—but, facing the bewildered queen, he gravely demanded as his gift the beautiful messenger who had brought him from the earth!

For a few moments the queen was so surprised she could not even answer him, but when, recovering from her amazement, she replied, she spoke slowly and softly:

“Little earth child, you have asked a great gift at my hands, but it is the law in Starland tonight that I can refuse you nothing! The royal princess from the stars you have asked for may return with you to earth. Make her happy, little earth child;

love her always, for she is very dear to us in Star-land."

So saying, she beckoned to the Star Princess, who came slowly forward. Then the queen, taking Robbie's hand, placed it within that of the smiling princess—at the same time the queen, stooping over, kissed the little fellow's eyelids.

It seemed to Robbie but a moment after that he heard his father saying: "Why, Robbie, what a lazy boy you are! The sun is streaming across your pillow and it is Christmas morning!"

"O," answered Robbie, promptly sitting up, "where is my Star Princess?"

"Your what?" smiled the startled man.

"Why, the beautiful royal princess I brought down from the star palace last night."

Robbie's father laughed softly as he answered: "She is in the next room sleeping."

"O, please, then take me to her," echoed the excited child.

"Yes, certainly, my son, you may see her; but promise to come quietly."

He led the way to the room where Robbie's beautiful mother slept, and there, cuddled close in her arms, lay the sleeping princess!

The royal little lady was very small and looked like a pink rosebud against the fine white sheets.

"But, father, protested Robbie, bewildered, "she is not a princess—she is only a little baby."

"Yes, she is a baby; but that is the disguise these royal princesses assume when they come upon the earth," replied his father, serenely.

"Will she have blue eyes and long golden hair when she gets bigger?" asked Robbie, distrustfully, eyeing the tiny morsel before him.

"I think she will and that she will be beautiful."

"Well, then," gravely continued the little boy, watching the chubby pink cheeks of the baby, "I think she is the nicest Christmas present we ever had, don't you?"

"I do, indeed," replied his father; "and when she is older you can tell her about your wonderful visit to the star palaces and how you chose a royal princess for your sister and brought her dainty ladyship here to gladden our hearts."

Then, as Robbie's mother smiled upon them both, the baby stirred and opened her bright eyes and the father lifted the little boy that he might kiss the royal princess and her mother!



THE MERMAN AND  
THE MERMAID





## X

### THE MERMAN AND THE MERMAID



N GREECE the skies are the bluest of things blue, and the clouds are white and fleecy, the high mountains are crowned with snow, while the sea is like a gleaming sapphire in its rich color. This beautiful land is filled with romance, and the legends of great deeds there still thrill the world with enthusiasm. Every little town and seaport has its wonderful and ancient legend, and many of these stories are as attractive as are the glorious temples.

In mythological lore, elves of light, fairer than the sun, were wont to dwell there, and halls of pure gold and silver were built for the gods and goddesses. Indeed, everything was beautiful to see. They, too, had their days of thanksgiving, and once, in the long ago, a rich man offered one hundred oxen with golden horns as his gift for charity;

the proceeds were to be used for the poor. At the same time a humble citizen who carried a small sack of meal laid his offering timidly down. Yet when the priests gathered the gifts together they said that the sack of meal was worth more than the golden-horned cattle, for it had been earned by the sweat of the poor man's brow and had been harder for him to bring than for the rich man to give his oxen. So, on this beautiful Thanksgiving morning, remember, when you are giving thanks for the blessings of the year and giving to the poor—because that is really the way to show your gratitude for your own blessings—that it isn't the size of your gift alone that makes it valuable, it is the spirit and the way in which you give it.

And now I shall tell you a story of a humble man whom the world still talks about, and on Thanksgiving Day still feels should be remembered because he gave much pleasure to the world, yet who did not have a penny to his name. Of course, it is only a legend, but it is about a man who really lived and I think you will like it. Once upon a time, in a far-away country, there lived a musical genius. He was very poor, but he soon became famous, for he played with a masterly hand, so that people crowded



The Musician who Charmed the Animals



to hear him. They filled the halls and the theaters until at last the places were suffocating and the authorities obliged him to play in the open air; no theater was large enough to seat the people who flocked to hear him. But when he played in the streets, wonder of wonders! even the trees began to move in delight; they nodded their heads and waved their branches in appreciation. Then the authorities, who were really very stupid, got angry and said, "This man and his music are a nuisance; even the trees and the flowers nod at his approach, and we must get rid of him." So they drove him out of the city and the musician was obliged to wander farther and farther, and finally he reached the woods. There the waterfalls danced and sang in accompaniment to his pipe instrument and the birds joined in the chorus, singing till their throats swelled with the sound. Indeed, wherever he went he was followed with delight, because there is nothing on earth as enjoyable and entrancing as beautiful music, and this man's gift was divine.

He was a very handsome man, with jet black hair and clear blue eyes, and he married a lovely girl and lived most happily with her, and she went everywhere with him. But when he was forced to travel

so much he built her a permanent home so that she could rest when she felt inclined. This favorite home of hers was in a blue grotto under the sea. Nothing like it could be found upon the earth. Its walls were as blue as indigo and all the rooms and corridors were lighted with a mysterious color. Tables of pink coral and quantities of pearls were spread everywhere, and sapphires, sardonyx, and opals were plentiful because, though the man had no money himself, he had many good friends and the nymphs of the ocean gathered their wealth to decorate the palace he built for his charming bride. He chose a place near a coral reef, so she could see the pink mountains of the sea, which are even more beautiful than the mountains on land. Whenever he played all the sea nymphs came close to listen, for his notes rolled out like cool and refreshing waves through golden seas, and peace and content entered the hearts of those about him.

Little by little his music became more talked of on the earth, because little by little the people learned the great fascination of the silent places he sought; and, finally, music lovers, despairing of hearing his wonderful notes again in their city homes, were obliged to seek him. On the earth they

always found him in the thick woodlands, and by the silver streams they would sit, quietly awaiting his pleasure or mood to play. In no other way could they hear him, but there, in the beautiful green woods, they heard strains of music which they could never forget. And they say that he still haunts the woods and that if you seek him with patience and sit quietly you will hear him lead his wonderful orchestra. And his scholars of the woods are so beautifully taught that they play almost as well as he.

The songs that you will hear cannot be described, but the glory of the music will make you tingle with a strange, sweet ecstasy. At first the silence is profound; then you will hear a faint trembling in the leaves, followed by a wild, sweet melody as they sway. Suddenly a bird breaks into song; then another joins it, and presently a chorus of richest sound fills the air. And all the time the wind stirring the branches above your head forms a low, soft accompaniment, and, perhaps, a stream purling and rippling with silver notes, beats time. Or a waterfall, like a great crescendo, is heard, but the leader of this band and all his orchestra are harmony itself.

And, as he stands flourishing his wand and the woods keep time with it, you believe all the weird

stories you have heard of his witchery and his charm. I think this must be the real reason we all love the woods, the lakes and the rivers, because in all these places he is said to dwell. Of course, on the sea he has a different name. There they call him merman, because he dwells with his beautiful mermaid wife. She is bewilderingly lovely, so that people who see her are said to lose their minds, as they do their hearts, in gazing on her wondrous beauty. Fishermen sometimes see her when a thin mist hangs over the sea. Then she sits on the surface of the water, combing her long golden hair as she sings, and driving her snow-white cattle to feed on the sandy beach.

And the songs she sings are wonderful, for her musical husband has taught her well, and they bewitch all who hear them. The fishermen hear her sweet voice through the long hours of the luminous night and they whisper to themselves: "It is the siren of the sea and we must beware of seeing her, for if we get too near we will feel the enchantment she weaves about her and we will be drawn into the net she casts and we will forget home and family, and we must avoid her." So they stop their ears to deaden the sound of her entrancing notes.

The fishermen claim the real home of the musical elf and his mermaid wife is at the bottom of the sea, and not in the blue grotto at all. They say they dwell in a palace of shining gold, and that if you watch closely on a dark night you can see sparks of fire on the tops of the waves, which are the reflection of their shining, golden palace. But, whether they live in the shimmering depths of the blue sea or in the heart of the wonderful green woods where the spreading branches of the trees soften the light of the hot sun, or give glimpses of snowy clouds floating across the blue heavens, it is certainly a pretty legend, I think; don't you?



THE KING WHO  
NEVER SMILED





## XI

### THE KING WHO NEVER SMILED



NCE upon a time there lived a powerful King who ruled over one of the largest kingdoms in the world. Kings and nobles knelt before him, obeying his slightest word. No one disputed his will, but all brought him gifts to do him homage.

He accepted it all as his due, for he honestly believed himself the greatest of living kings.

His wife was wonderfully beautiful, his children were charming, his palace was magnificent; surely, you would have thought him the happiest man alive. But, alas! he was not; far from it. He was very unhappy.

For a long time only the Queen guessed his discontent, and she kept his secret. But as time passed and his gloom increased the courtiers began to whisper among themselves, and gradually the whole

court learned that something was worrying the King. During the day he was more cheerful, but towards evening he always grew more and more restless, and when darkness approached he was terribly depressed. The court planned pleasures to distract him; they hunted or played games all day, and had balls and great spectacles to amuse him in the evening. But though they prolonged the day all they could night had to come and sleep must be had. And when the time for separation came the King was always despondent, until gradually he was spoken of as the man who never smiled.

The beautiful Queen alone knew the cause of his unhappiness, but she evidently could not help him, and he was opposed to having the court physician called.

Finally, when he was in a state bordering on despair, the King consented to have the wise men called in to find out the cause of his ailment. Then the learned doctors of medicine found that whenever the King fell asleep he was troubled with the most terrible dreams. Dreams so terrible that the Queen was obliged to awaken him lest he should die. The torment of the dreams made him dread the approach of night with a terror he could not exag-

gerate. The wise men, hearing this, shook their heads gravely and, consulting together, prescribed medicines. But all their medicines did not relieve his torture; no relief came and the unfortunate King was getting worse, so that every one felt he was about to die.

The Queen, in despair, felt calamity was upon her and her household; and as she truly loved her husband she was most unhappy. One night, as she sat by his bed holding his hand and wishing she could do something to help him, she heard a queer sound. Her husband was lying in a stupor of exhaustion from want of sleep and heard nothing. The Queen was looking through a window; her eyes were fixed on a twinkling star glittering with a splendid light. Below the window were the green trees and she could just see their waving branches stirring under the faint breeze. The slight sound startled her, the long rays from the star seemed to shine more brilliantly, and their luminous gleams suddenly filled the room. Then in the room close to her she saw a beautiful little creature clad in silver and white, and falling across her shoulders was long golden hair. The Queen was quite overawed. Presently the tiny creature spoke, and her voice was like

softly falling water: "Oh, unhappy Queen, all your wise men and all your learned doctors will not cure your sick husband, for the disease is in his mind and not in his body. Within himself lies his only cure. Let him look well into his heart. Does he think of others? Does he not accept all and give nothing in return? Until he learns to give generously, to make others happy, he will never be able to enjoy what he has. Until he learns this there will always be bitterness in his dreams. Tell him he will die unless he cures himself."

With these words the silver sprite slowly disappeared. The Queen sprang up to detain her, but the fairly-like creature floated through the window. And even the star had disappeared. The Queen hurriedly called the King and told him what she had seen. He was greatly astonished, but he was much impressed and it made him very thoughtful. The very next day he gave orders that the poor of the city should be clothed, the hungry fed, and little by little he made many people happy. He visited the poor himself and talked with them, and when night came he was so tired with the day's good work that he would fall asleep and not waken till morning. His health improved, his bad dreams disappeared,

and he enjoyed a happy life once more. But he never forgot the advice of the silver sprite, and always on the anniversary of that day publicly gave thanks for the blessings he had received. He set this special day apart so that he and his people might thank the Giver of all things for their blessings, and he called the day Thanksgiving. For though he never forgot to give much, he also received much.

The blue sky, the golden sunshine, the lovely flowers, the fruits of the earth belong to all, and though they are given us with many other blessings most lavishly, it is only just that in return we should be grateful on Thanksgiving, and try in every way to make others happy; try to make them rejoice and be thankful, too.

**THE END**

NOV 28 1913















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